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PROSPECTS FOR CREATION OF A MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE GROUPING AND PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 22 June 1954. Concurring were the Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Director of Intelligence, USAF; the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Director of Intelligence, AEC, and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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PROSPECTS FOR CREATION OF A MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE GROUPING AND PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH A DEVELOPMENT

THE PROBLEM

To examine, with special reference to the "northern tier"¹ approach, the problems likely to be encountered in the development of a Middle East defense grouping, and to estimate: (a) the prospects for adherence of other states to a loose grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement; (b) the probable political and military consequences of such a development ; and (c) the probable reactions of other countries.

SCOPE

This estimate focuses primarily on the prospects for creation of a loose Middle East defense grouping through a "northern tier" approach. This would involve initially adherence of Iraq and Iran to the US-sponsored Turk-Pakistani agreement. At a later date, it might involve the adherence of other Middle Eastern states, and possible eventual expansion of such a grouping into a formal regional defense organization. We recognize, however, that various factors such as US or UK policy, the attitudes of various Middle East states, or the Soviet reaction might dictate alternative approaches to meet individual country problems as they arise. For example, some Middle East states might be unwilling to adhere to the Turk-Pakistani agreement but might be willing, in return for US aid, to cooperate in regional defense through a grouping of their own or some form of bilateral relationship with the US and/or UK. We briefly assess some of these alternatives.

The military portions of this estimate concern themselves primarily with the defense problems within the area extending from the Suez Canal and the Southeast Turkish border to the western border of Pakistan. We do not consider the problems of defense of Turkey against attack from the north, which is a NATO responsibility, nor the defense of the lines of communication into the area.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Turk-Pakistani agreement provides a new basis for development of a Western-oriented defense grouping in the Middle East avoiding some of the problems which defeated the two previous efforts in this direction. Although formi-

dable obstacles still remain to be overcome, a regional grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement would be less subject to the stigma of being under direct Western control than were the Middle East Command and Middle East Defense Organization. The desire for US military and economic aid is probably the

¹ The "northern tier" states are Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran.

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most powerful inducement to enter into such an arrangement, and the willingness of individual states to join will depend largely on the nature, scale, and terms of the US aid offered them.

2. An important obstacle to the adherence of any Arab state to the Turk-Pakistani agreement is Egypt's opposition prior to a Suez settlement. If a satisfactory Suez agreement can be reached, Egypt will in fact be involved in regional defense and much of its opposition to Western-supported regional defense arrangements will be undercut. Under these circumstances we believe that Iraq would adhere to the Turk-Pakistani agreement and the way would be paved for the adherence of other Arab states. Egypt, conscious that it might be unable to play a key role in a scheme based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement, would probably prefer some other form of peacetime defense association with the West. However, it might be willing to adhere to the agreement if necessary to secure substantial US aid.

3. Even if there is no Suez settlement, Iraq probably would be willing to adhere to the Turk-Pakistani agreement in the face of opposition from Egypt alone. Such a move would raise a critical issue among the Arab states, but some might still follow the Iraqi lead. Iraq would probably not adhere if it thereby incurred a grave risk of general opposition from the other Arab states and increased internal opposition.

4. Iran's adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement is unlikely at any early date. However, it might eventually join an established regional defense grouping if: (a) the oil dispute had been resolved; (b) Iran's leadership had confirmed its ability to hold extremist anti-Western ele-

ments in check; and (c) Iran's military strength had been substantially increased with US aid.

5. The immediate effects of a loose regional defense grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement and backed by US military aid programs would be primarily political and psychological rather than military. Creation of such a grouping would: (a) tend to create a favorable climate for development of greater awareness of the Soviet threat and closer regional defense cooperation; (b) possibly encourage participating states to cooperate more closely on other matters, both with the Western allies and among themselves; and (c) strengthen the position of Western-oriented elements in participating countries. However, such developments would not materially affect the internal weaknesses which have thus far undermined Middle East strength and stability, and would by no means eliminate the tensions and fears which have thus far alienated much of the area from the West.

6. Such a loose grouping would not *per se* result in any significant reduction of the area's military vulnerability. However, together with US military aid programs, it would create greater opportunities than in the past for reducing existing Middle East defense deficiencies. The requirement for outside ground forces might eventually be significantly reduced. However, achievement of even this limited goal would be a long and costly operation, involving considerable training and equipment over a period of years, and effective Middle East defense will continue to depend for the foreseeable future on substantial Western force contributions.

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7. Creation of a regional defense grouping would also facilitate eventual development of a formal defense organization with some form of direct US-UK participation. However, serious political difficulties arising from intraregional rivalries and distrust of Western participation would first have to be overcome.

8. Finally, creation of even a loose regional defense grouping and related US aid programs would encourage development of a more favorable atmosphere for at least some working arrangements for Western base and operating rights. However, most states would remain reluctant to countenance peacetime US-UK base rights and would probably demand that such facilities remain under their control. Should the US push too fast or too far for commitments, it might jeopardize overall progress toward defense cooperation.

9. US arming of the Arabs and efforts to associate them with a regional grouping would arouse strong Israeli opposition and to that extent increase Arab-Israeli tensions. There would be increased danger of renewal of the Pales-

tine war unless suitable precautions were taken to discourage Israeli aggression and possible future Arab military adventurism. Israel will press for US arms aid to counter such aid to the Arab states.

10. While further US moves in support of the "northern tier" concept would in some degree increase US-Indian tensions, it is unlikely that an open rift would develop between India and the US as a result of this factor alone. Should Pakistan be materially strengthened as a result of US aid, India also would seek to build up its own forces. In any event, it is extremely unlikely that India would move significantly closer to the Soviet Bloc.

11. The USSR will attempt to counteract US efforts to build a defense grouping in the Middle East, particularly if US bases are involved. The USSR would increase its political warfare activities in the Middle East and might exert pressure on such vulnerable points as Iran and Afghanistan. We believe, however, that the USSR would not feel itself sufficiently threatened to undertake major retaliatory actions such as invasion of either of these states.

DISCUSSION

I. CURRENT SITUATION

12. At present the political and military weakness of the Middle East constitutes a strategic liability for the US and its allies. Along with the Turkish straits, the territories centering on the Persian Gulf have been traditional objects of Russian expansionist aspiration, and the area would invite attack by the USSR in the event of general war. A successful invasion would: (a) outflank Western defenses in Turkey; (b) provide the USSR valuable defense in depth; (c) deprive the West of oil fields which now provide about 90 percent of Western European requirements; and (d) threaten the major communications lines running through the Suez area.

13. The Arab states, Iran, and Israel have almost no ability to withstand a Soviet attack. While Turkey has steadily grown in strength and tied itself firmly to the West, its neighbors to the south and east have remained politically and militarily weak, divided among themselves, and concerned more with their grievances against the Western Powers and Israel than with the Communist threat. The increase of nationalism and of anti-Western and particularly anti-UK feelings in Iran and the Arab states, as manifested in such issues as the Suez and Anglo-Iranian oil controversies, has reinforced local tendencies toward neutralism. One result has been a gradual undermining of the system of British alli-

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ances and base agreements on which defense of the Middle East has heretofore been largely predicated.

14. In this political climate initial postwar Western attempts to develop a formula for Middle East cooperation in regional defense efforts have failed. In October 1951, just after Egypt's abrogation of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian defense treaty, the US, UK, France, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa agreed to form a Middle East Command (MEC) with Arab state participation. Their objective was largely to overcome Egyptian objections to UK control of the Suez base by creating a new defense grouping to assume responsibility for it. However, Egypt summarily rejected the MEC proposal. This proposal also received a cool reception in the other Arab states, which were reluctant to appear out of step with Egypt and were repelled by the idea of subjecting themselves to a Western-led "command" organization. To overcome this last objection, the "command" concept was dropped in 1952 and a looser Middle East Defense Organization (MEDO) proposed in its place. This proposal aroused some favorable response among Arab leaders interested in obtaining US military aid, but was not sufficiently attractive to overcome Arab resistance to participation before a Suez agreement had been reached. When the US and Turkey opposed the British view that MEDO should be set up without waiting for Arab participation, the plan was abandoned in 1953.

15. The US is now seeking to promote progress toward a regional defense grouping based on the "northern tier" states — Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan — which are most directly exposed to Soviet attack and most sensitive to the Soviet threat. In connection with the provision of US military aid to Pakistan, the latter and Turkey were recently persuaded to join in an agreement providing for consultation and cooperation on certain defense matters as well as in other fields (see Appendix). Although the Turk-Pakistani agreement is far from a military alliance and will have limited military significance without the adherence of other states, it might provide a frame-

work on which a Middle East defense grouping could eventually be based.

16. The present climate for progress toward a regional defense grouping appears more auspicious than at the time of the MEC and MEDO approaches, even though serious obstacles still remain. In Iran the Mossadeq regime has given way to a more Western-oriented government, and there is hope that the oil dispute between Iran and the UK will be settled. Both Iran and Iraq have expressed interest in eventually joining a "northern tier" arrangement and both have accepted US military aid. Iraq's acceptance of US aid may be a development of far-reaching significance in the Arab world. Comment from most other Arab capitals has been generally favorable and even Egypt has not objected strongly.

II. PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL DEFENSE GROUPING BASED UPON THE TURK-PAKISTANI AGREEMENT

Basic Factors—Pro and Con

17. *Advantages of the new approach.* The "northern tier" approach via seeking new adherents to the Turk-Pakistani agreement avoids some of the problems which defeated the two previous efforts to establish a Western-oriented Middle East defense grouping. The shift to initial emphasis on a "northern tier" grouping instead of one based initially on Egypt has already reduced the likelihood that prolongation of the Suez dispute — and resultant Egyptian pressure on other Arab states — will prevent any progress at all.

18. Equally important, a gradual step-by-step effort to draw the Middle East states into regional defense arrangements is better suited to overcoming their strong reluctance to tie themselves firmly to the West. A regional grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement would be less subject to the stigma of being under direct Western control, even though US sponsorship of the idea is already sufficiently clear to provide its opponents with propaganda capital. Moreover, the consultative nature of the Turk-Pakistani agreement, and the lack of formal defense commitments either in that agreement or the US-Iraqi

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MDAP agreement will tend to encourage the adherence of other states.

19. *Desire for US aid.* Probably the most powerful factor influencing the Middle East states, including Pakistan, toward entering into any form of US-sponsored regional defense arrangements is their desire thereby to obtain US military and economic aid. The willingness of the Arab states and Iran to join the Turk-Pakistani axis will depend largely on the scale and nature of US aid and the terms on which it is offered them. Individual countries will bargain hard to obtain substantial assistance and will probably place particular emphasis on "prestige" items such as tanks and jet planes.

20. *Reluctance to make commitments.* Most Middle East states will be anxious to obtain US assistance with the fewest possible strings attached. As in the case of Iraq, the crucial decision of the other Arab states and Iran will come not over accepting US military aid but at the point where they must decide whether or not to associate themselves with other states. While they might be willing if necessary to make some commitments in order to obtain US aid, they would regard such action as a bargain which would be justified only if the material rewards seemed sufficiently great and the limitations on their freedom of action sufficiently small. They will desire to keep their identification with the West at a minimum and will almost certainly seek to obtain initial US aid if possible without prior commitment to adhere to even as loose and vague an agreement as the Turk-Pakistani agreement.

21. *Lack of concern over Soviet threat.* One major reason for the reluctance of Middle East countries to commit themselves to even a loose defense grouping is that most of them are motivated primarily by other considerations than those of meeting the Soviet threat. Except in Turkey, and to a much lesser degree Iran and Iraq, they are preoccupied with their own problems and feel no immediate need to build up defenses against the USSR. Even in Iran and Iraq the desire to strengthen themselves against the USSR is only a secondary motivation. Most Middle East gov-

ernments desire US military and economic aid to strengthen their domestic positions and also, in the case of the Arabs, to improve their military position *vis-a-vis* Israel. Pakistan similarly desires aid to build itself up domestically and in relation to India.

22. *Anti-Western sentiment.* Another serious obstacle is the continued strong undercurrent of resistance in the Arab states, Iran, and even Pakistan to any closer alignment with the West. Most of the peoples of the Middle East countries feel little sense of identification with the West and see the Western impact on the Middle East as a threat to their way of life. These feelings are already being exploited both by the nationalists and by the Communists and their front organizations. Such elements would be strongly opposed to adherence of Iraq or any other Arab states to the Turk-Pakistani agreement. Similarly, efforts to bring Iran into such a grouping would be subject to strong Iranian nationalist attack.

23. *Intraregional tensions.* Such factors as Iraqi-Egyptian rivalry for leadership of the Arab League, and Saudi Arabian fear of Hashemite dynastic ambitions are additional obstacles to bringing these states together into an effective regional defense grouping. At the same time, despite the many divisions within the Arab world, there is enough Arab League solidarity, based largely on opposition to Israel, to constitute a deterrent to individual action.

24. On the other hand, while Arab hostility to Israel and anger at what Arabs have regarded as a pro-Israeli US policy have hitherto handicapped US efforts to develop closer ties with the Arabs, we believe that at present Arab-Israeli tensions and Arab fear of Israeli aggression are powerful factors in influencing the Arab states to seek US aid and perhaps make minimal commitments in return. Nevertheless, the Arab-Israeli controversy precludes Israeli membership in any regional grouping. It also poses the problem of securing Arab participation in such a manner as to minimize the danger of precipitate Israeli action to block Arab rearmament or an eventual Arab attack on Israel. The Arabs will

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insist on the right to use any US military aid to defend themselves against an Israeli attack.

25. *Attitudes of Turkey and Pakistan.* Other problems arise from the fact that both Turkey and Pakistan, though charter members of the new "northern tier" axis, are preoccupied with problems other than the defense of the gap between them. The Turks are chiefly concerned with the defense under NATO of their frontiers with the Bloc and with promoting a Balkan alliance. The Turks also hold a low opinion of the military capabilities of the Arabs and Iran, and apparently adhered to the Turk-Pakistani agreement as much to accommodate US wishes as in any hope of facilitating area defense. We believe that the Turks, who supported both MEC and MEDO, will strongly support any US-backed regional defense arrangement. However, they will seek direct US-UK commitments and are not likely to take any independent initiative to organize regional defense.

26. Though Pakistan professes to be concerned over the Soviet threat, its attention is focused on its differences with India. It regards US aid chiefly as a military and political buttress to its position in the subcontinent. Pakistan, like Turkey, would favor more effective Middle East defense arrangements, but would view these largely as a means of increasing its strength and prestige *vis-a-vis* India and its pretensions to leadership of the Moslem world. Moreover, Pakistan's stability and its capacity to provide forces for use elsewhere may be seriously threatened by domestic difficulties, particularly in East Pakistan.

27. *Attitude of the UK.* The UK would almost certainly support efforts to promote a regional defense grouping and has given qualified endorsement to the new "northern tier" approach. However, it recognizes that anti-British feeling in the area would hamper the development of any grouping with overt UK sponsorship, and may therefore prefer to let the US take the initiative and wait to see how the scheme develops. The UK will almost certainly favor eventual creation of a

formal regional defense organization with full US-UK participation and command responsibility. Indeed, the chief US-UK difficulties would be likely to arise over the British desire to be "senior partner" in an area of traditional British interests.

28. Moreover, while concerned with building up Middle East ability to meet Soviet aggression, the UK is also deeply concerned with protecting its special position in the area. The British will continue to urge that Western arms aid be doled out in such manner as to preserve Western bargaining power, and will attempt to prevent US influence from displacing that of the UK, particularly in such traditional British strongholds as Iraq and Jordan. The UK will also urge that the US purchase British equipment for those states whose forces are already British-equipped.

Prospects for Adherence of Other States to the Turk-Pakistani Agreement

29. Despite the many obstacles discussed above, we believe that at least some additional states probably would adhere eventually to the Turk-Pakistani agreement, if given adequate incentive in the form of US aid, and particularly if there had been prior settlement of the Iranian oil and Suez base disputes.

30. *Egypt.* Although Iran and Iraq are the logical candidates for initial inclusion in a "northern tier" grouping, we believe that the willingness of Iraq or other Arab states to adhere to the Turk-Pakistani treaty may still depend to a large degree on the attitude of Egypt. Egypt has expressed disapproval of the Turk-Pakistani agreement because its leaders believe that the states of the area should withhold cooperation with the West until the Suez base dispute has been settled. The Egyptians also fear that prior progress toward a "northern tier" grouping would weaken Egypt's own claims to Arab leadership and prospects for obtaining extensive US aid.

31. Should the UK and Egypt reach an early Suez agreement, we believe that Cairo would no longer seek, or for that matter be able, to exert the same restraining pressure on its Arab neighbors to oppose closer ties with the

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West. Indeed a Suez settlement which called for Egypt to make the Suez base available in event of attack on an Arab state or Turkey would in fact involve Egypt in regional defense. Moreover, the Egyptian Government has been a persistent petitioner for US military aid and has hinted that in return it too would be willing to join in regional defense arrangements once the Suez base question was cleared up.

32. The Egyptians, conscious that they might be unable to play a key role in a scheme based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement, would probably prefer some other form of peacetime defense association with the West. For example, Egypt and perhaps other Arab states might propose that the US and UK build a regional grouping around the Arab Collective Security Pact. The proposed "pooling" of Saudi and Egyptian military resources, though unlikely to be actually carried out, may be indicative of the way in which Egypt and like-minded Arab states may seek to create some counter-arrangement to the Turk-Pakistani agreement, which would minimize a key Iraqi role.

33. However, Egypt might be willing to join the Turk-Pakistani agreement if necessary to secure substantial US military and economic aid. Egypt would be anxious not to be bypassed by implementation of a "northern tier" scheme without Egyptian participation. In any event, prestige-conscious Egypt would be insistent that it receive as much if not more US aid than any other Arab state.

34. If the present Suez negotiations fail, the Egyptian attitude would be problematical. The Egyptian Government might revert to the ultranationalist policies of its predecessors, and make all-out efforts to forestall adherence of any other Arab state to the Turk-Pakistani agreement. On the other hand the Egyptian Government might renew efforts to seek some other form of *modus vivendi* which would settle the base problem and permit it to secure US aid.

35. *Iraq.* We believe that Iraq's present leadership basically favors a policy of closer ties with the West. More aware of the Soviet

menace than most other Arab leaders, Iraq's ruling group also sees in such a policy an opportunity to strengthen Iraq's position in the Middle East. Having long chafed under Iraq's relegation to a secondary role in Arab affairs by the anti-Hashemite combination of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Iraqi leaders welcome the opportunity to seize the diplomatic initiative from Egypt and to become the leading Arab military power. They are also attracted by the idea of obtaining additional security against Israeli attack. Finally, they hope by a pro-Western policy to insure continuing Western support for their regime. Although British support has been an important factor in the maintenance of Iraq's present ruling group, its members believe that the Anglo-Iraqi alliance, which expires in 1957, will be politically impossible of renewal in its present form. While Iraq's leaders would be willing to maintain such links to the UK as were politically feasible, they probably regard US military aid and adherence to a US-supported regional defense grouping as a preferable alternative to a formal UK alliance.

36. The Iraqi Government has already taken an important first step in the execution of this policy by accepting US military aid. The leading figures in Iraq's ruling oligarchy have frequently hinted that at the appropriate time they would be willing to join in regional defense efforts if provided US military aid. Indeed Iraq accepted such aid recognizing that the future scale of the aid program would probably depend upon Iraq's willingness to participate in regional defense.

37. Nevertheless, the Iraqis almost certainly place far greater emphasis on the development of Iraqi military strength than on regional defense. Moreover, while the Iraqi leaders are apparently able and willing to suppress any internal disturbances which may be created in an effort to block their adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement, they almost certainly believe that such a move would be likely to arouse considerably greater opposition both at home and from Egypt and Saudi Arabia than has their acceptance of US military aid. It is significant that Iraq not only insisted that the US aid agreement be

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modified so as to make clear that it involved no political commitments but was maneuvered into denying before the Arab League Political Committee any present intention of adhering to the Turk-Pakistani agreement.

38. The Iraqi Government will almost certainly proceed cautiously, and its final decision whether or not to adhere will depend on its assessment of: (a) the benefits it has already achieved from the US aid agreement; (b) the need to take such a step in order to obtain the level of US aid it desires; and (c) the amount of resistance it would encounter internally and from the other Arab states. We believe that if an early Suez settlement were reached and Egyptian opposition abated, Iraq would adhere soon thereafter to the Turk-Pakistani agreement. Even in the absence of such a settlement, Iraq may eventually adhere, particularly if it sees substantial benefits from US aid. The Iraqi Government probably would be willing to proceed in the face of opposition from Egypt alone. It would probably not do so if it thereby incurred a grave risk of general opposition from the other Arab states and increased internal opposition.

39. *Other Arab States.* Various other Arab states will probably be willing to follow Iraq's example in accepting US military aid, particularly if Egyptian opposition has abated. Acceptance of such aid would probably strengthen Arab elements favoring closer ties with the West. Under these circumstances, if both Iraq and Egypt should join the Turk-Pakistani agreement, they would probably be followed by most other Arab states. Lebanon, in general more Western-oriented than most Arab states, has indicated a desire for US military aid and would probably be willing subsequently to adhere to the Turk-Pakistani agreement. Syria also has shown interest in US military aid, although there is substantial internal political opposition to closer ties with the West. Libya, anxious for US assistance, would almost certainly be willing to join the other Arab states if invited. We also believe that Jordan would eventually follow the Iraqi lead. Saudi Arabia (and Yemen) would remain highly suspicious of any Western-sponsored

regional defense arrangement in which Iraq played a key role, though the Saudis might join if Egypt did so.

40. On the other hand, Iraqi adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement over strong Egyptian objections would raise a critical issue among the Arab states. Such a move would directly challenge not only the existing distribution of power within the Arab League but also the neutralism which has thus far dominated the postwar Arab outlook. It appears likely that the result would at least initially be a sharp cleavage within the Arab League. Hashemite Jordan would probably align itself with Iraq. Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and perhaps Libya would probably align themselves with Egypt. Lebanon would probably remain on the sidelines, and Syria's reaction is unpredictable because of its acute political instability.

41. *Iran.* Iran's adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement is unlikely at any early date. Even if a moderate leadership in Iran succeeds in solving the oil problem and in holding the extremists in check over a protracted period, it will be influenced by: (a) doubts regarding the desirability of abandoning Iran's traditional policy of playing the great powers off against each other, especially in the face of possible Soviet retaliation; (b) distrust of the Turks and Pakistanis, coupled with fear of being treated as a junior partner; (c) suspicion that the agreement was really just an indirect means of extending US-UK influence. Further Communist successes in Asia might also adversely affect Iran's willingness to join in regional defense arrangements. These considerations will make Iran reluctant to join a "northern tier" grouping until the adherence of other states indicates that the plan has broad regional support. Moreover, the Shah has repeatedly emphasized that he would not be ready to join a regional defense grouping until Iran's military capabilities had been substantially increased.

42. At the same time the Shah is ambitious to build up an effective military establishment with US aid, both to strengthen the prestige of his regime and to increase Iran's ability to

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defend itself against Soviet attack. He has told the US that Iran, if strengthened by US aid, would consider joining the Turk-Pakistani grouping at the proper time. The army would also probably support such a move. The Shah and his associates would probably feel that participation in a purely regional defense arrangement with Turkey, Pakistan, and other Middle East states would offer the USSR less of a pretext for intervention under the 1921 Soviet-Iranian Treaty — as well as be easier for internal Iranian acceptance — than would an open alliance with the West. However, the Iranians are also keenly aware of the present inability of such a grouping to afford them much assistance in withstanding Soviet attack and would almost certainly seek to link their participation to additional aid and security commitments from the West.

III. POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF CREATION OF A LOOSE DEFENSE GROUPING

Effect on Participating States

43. Participation of additional Middle East states in the Turk-Pakistani defense grouping and related US military aid programs would probably have the following results:

a. Their acceptance of US military aid would of itself tend to create a favorable climate which would give the US an opportunity to develop greater awareness of the Soviet threat and closer regional defense cooperation. Their adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement, although motivated largely by the desire to obtain such aid, would enhance these favorable effects.

b. Participating states might also be encouraged to cooperate more closely, both with the Western allies and among themselves, on other matters as well.

c. The position of Western-oriented elements in these countries, which hitherto have been inhibited by neutralist and anti-Western sentiment, would be strengthened.

While these beneficial effects would be greatest if Iraq, Egypt, and Iran adhered to the Turk-Pakistani agreement, most of them would be present to some degree even if only two of these states joined.

44. Whether or not adherence of the states of the area to a loose regional grouping would increase their domestic strength, prestige, and self-confidence would depend in large part upon many other factors, such as the outcome of the Iranian oil and Suez base issues, and the Arab-Israeli situation. If outstanding issues between the West and states of the area remained unresolved and if other internal political developments resulted in the weakening of local governments, those governments which went too far or too fast toward adhering to a US-sponsored defense grouping would risk an increase in nationalist and extremist opposition and a possible loss of power. Accordingly, commitments and agreements made by one regime might shortly be repudiated by its successor.

45. Moreover, US military aid programs and creation of a loose regional grouping would not materially affect the complex of internal weaknesses which have thus far undermined the stability and strength of most Middle East states. At best, they would only create a more favorable atmosphere in which attempts to overcome these difficulties might be carried out. The basic social and economic instability of the area would continue to provide grievances on which Communist and ultranationalist elements could capitalize. Progress in overcoming these basic weaknesses will in many cases be impossible without outside economic aid.

46. US military aid programs would operate to strengthen the position of the military elements which already play major roles in the domestic politics of many Middle East states. Such a strengthening of the military group would in most cases tend to increase political stability. In some cases, however, it might introduce a new element of friction which could lead to increased political maneuvering by the military and reduce area stability and strength.

47. US aid and area participation in the Turk-Pakistani grouping also would by no means eliminate the tensions and fears which have so far alienated much of the area from the West. Even among those disposed to accept

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US aid and a Western orientation, the strong desire to avoid real or fancied Western encroachments on local sovereignty would complicate US efforts to develop a position of strength. At the same time the US would be confronted with a continuing series of demands for extensive US aid commitments. The US would also be faced with a new series of problems arising from rivalries and disappointments among the participants over allocation of US aid.

Effect on Arab-Israeli Tensions

48. It is already apparent that strong Israeli opposition to US arms aid to the Arab states or efforts to attract them to a Middle East defense grouping will create troublesome repercussions. While Israel is more aware than many of its Arab neighbors of the need for defenses against Soviet aggression, it is far more concerned over the effect of such US moves on its own military and diplomatic position *vis-a-vis* the Arabs. Israel is violently opposed to any strengthening of the Arabs, suspicious of Pakistan's tendency to identify itself more closely with them, and fearful lest Arab adherence to the Turk-Pakistani agreement might increase Arab unity and strength to the detriment of Israel. Therefore, the Israelis will continue to make every effort to delay or block such moves, both through Zionist and diplomatic channels, and through their policy toward the Arab states.

49. Israel is likely to place even greater emphasis than at present on its potentially explosive policy of organized reprisals to discourage Arab border violations. The Israelis apparently feel that time is working against them and that they must act to resolve the highly unsatisfactory armistice situation and force the Arabs toward a settlement while they are still stronger than their Arab opponents. The present Israeli Government apparently opposes a deliberate reopening of hostilities. However, advocacy of a preventive war, intended largely to forestall US strengthening of the Arabs, will increase, especially if and when actual delivery of arms to contiguous Arab states becomes imminent.

50. Especially in the short run, therefore, Israeli opposition to US arming of the Arabs and efforts to bring them into a regional grouping will lead to an increase in Arab-Israeli tensions. Moreover, in time the Arabs might become more belligerent as their own military posture improved with US aid, especially if Arab-Israeli tensions were not reduced. There would be increased danger of renewal of the Palestine war unless suitable precautions were taken to discourage Israeli aggression and possible future military adventurism on the part of the Arabs.

51. Israel recognizes that flat Arab opposition to Israeli participation in a regional defense grouping bars it for the foreseeable future, and it thus may favor bilateral defense relationships with the US and UK in return for US aid. In any event, Israel will put strong pressure on the US to secure arms aid to counter US aid to the Arab states. Such aid, in turn, would create complications in US relations with the Arab states.

Effect on other Intraregional Tensions and Jealousies

52. Further moves toward even a loose regional defense grouping might also lead at least temporarily to intensification of other intraregional strains and jealousies. As noted above, Iraqi participation may stir up old animosities within the Arab League. Long-standing suspicions must be overcome before the Arab states and Iran can be brought to work effectively with the Turks. As in the case of the Arab-Israeli problem, special care will probably have to be taken to keep these tensions to a minimum if a regional defense grouping is to realize its long-range potential as a stabilizing factor.

IV. POTENTIAL MILITARY CONSEQUENCES OF CREATION OF A LOOSE MIDDLE EAST GROUPING

53. The immediate effects of a loose defense grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement and backed by US military aid programs, would be primarily political and psychological rather than military. It would not *per se* result in any significant reduction

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of the area's vulnerability to Soviet military attack. From a military standpoint, the chief value of such a development is rather that it would create greater opportunities than in the past for reducing Middle East defense deficiencies. These deficiencies fall into three general categories: (a) lack of effective indigenous defense capabilities; (b) lack of any unified defense structure; and (c) inadequacy of existing Western bases and facilities.

Prospects for Developing Effective Indigenous Forces

54. The most serious weakness in the defenses of the Middle East is the paucity of adequately trained and equipped forces available to block a Soviet thrust through Iran, the Arab states, and Israel. None of the states in the path of such an attack could now effectively defend themselves. Moreover, no help could be expected from Turkey or Pakistan, practically all of whose present forces would be required for defense of their own territory.

55. Thus defense of the Middle East at present hinges almost entirely on the ability of the Western Powers to provide major ground forces, as well as necessary naval and air units, in which the Arab states and Iran are almost entirely lacking. The limited UK and Commonwealth forces likely to be available would be inadequate for defense of the oil areas of Iraq and the Persian Gulf and would probably have to be reserved for defense of the Suez Canal approaches.

56. US military aid programs along the lines of those set up for Iran and Iraq provide a basis for a modest start toward development of a significant indigenous defense contribution. However, achievement of even limited goals would necessarily involve a slow and arduous process requiring close and continuing US or UK supervision. Although manpower is available, deficiencies in command, organization, and supporting facilities, shortages of qualified officers and technicians, and the general low level of education and technical skills among the population at large would limit the rate at which new equipment could be absorbed and would otherwise handicap the

development of effective combat units. US advisors and instructors would encounter varying degrees of resistance to their efforts to promote vigorous training programs and to effect needed reforms in organization, staff and logistic techniques, and tactics. In some instances special efforts would have to be made to develop adequate morale and fighting spirit among the troops.

57. We estimate that if the Middle East countries cooperated to the fullest extent with US training and planning groups, and if the US provided the materiel and budgetary support necessary, it would take at least three to five years to correct current deficiencies even in existing Middle East ground forces. Given the conditions that are likely to prevail, it is probable that the process actually would take considerably longer in most cases. Moreover, such an effort would require a far higher level of military aid than is now being provided Iran or is projected for initial aid programs to Pakistan and Iraq. The development of effective naval and air forces would be even more expensive, difficult, and time-consuming.

58. Efforts to improve the caliber of existing forces would be of particular value in the cases of Iran and Iraq, where a capability might be built up for inflicting greater delay on any Soviet attack through the Zagros mountain passes. However, there would remain a major problem of obtaining additional outside forces if a forward strategy of stabilizing on the Zagros line — and thus retaining possession of the major oilfields and advanced airbases of the Iraq-Persian Gulf area — were to be employed.

59. Even if the combat effectiveness of other indigenous forces in the area were significantly improved, they would probably not be available except for defense of their own territory. While the Israeli army would probably put up determined resistance to Soviet attack and might thereby contribute materially to defense of the Suez Canal approaches if adequately equipped, it is extremely unlikely that it could be used outside its own borders or in cooperation with Arab forces. Jordan's small British-led Arab Legion would

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probably be similarly immobilized. Egypt would almost certainly wish to use its forces for internal security, air defense of its cities, and protection of its Sinai borders. The armies of Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia are too small to make any significant contribution even locally, and an adequate economic and military base for any significant expansion does not now exist.

60. There is a possibility that Pakistan and/or Turkey would eventually be willing to contribute some forces for employment outside their own territories if given greatly increased help in expanding their present effective strength. Pakistan, militarily more advanced than its Arab and Iranian neighbors, has adequate manpower for expansion of its army to provide one or two divisions for employment in the Middle East. However, such an expansion would be impractical until the improvement of Pakistan's existing military establishment with US help was at least fairly well advanced. Even then Pakistan would be unwilling to make a commitment unless convinced that its remaining troops would provide adequate internal security and protection against the Soviet Bloc or India. The latter would probably regard strengthening of Pakistan's forces as requiring a comparable buildup of its own. Since Pakistan's existing military establishment already places a heavy strain on the weak Pakistani economy, an expansion would not be possible unless special economic assistance as well as the necessary equipment and training support were supplied from outside.

61. While Turkey's economy is stronger than that of Pakistan, it too has already assumed about as heavy a military commitment as it can bear and would have similar requirements for outside budgetary as well as arms aid support in establishing and maintaining additional forces. In any event, it is unlikely that those Pakistani or Turkish forces which might be made available would by themselves be sufficient to fill the existing gap in the defense of the Middle East.

62. In sum, effective defense of the Middle East will continue to depend on substantial Western force contributions for the foresee-

able future. If sufficient time, energy, and material were expended, the requirement for outside ground forces might eventually be significantly reduced. However, such a buildup would be a long and costly operation. Substantial Western ground forces would still be required until a stronger indigenous economic base had been established and until the internal weaknesses, intraregional tensions, and suspicions toward the West which now limit a common defense effort had been greatly reduced. In any event, the West would have to continue to bear the principal burden of supplying necessary air, naval, and logistic support to any indigenous forces which might be built up.

Prospects for Development of a Formal Regional Defense Organization

63. Even a loose Middle East defense grouping supported by Western arms aid and advisors would provide some opportunities for limited defense coordination and cooperation. It would also furnish a foundation on which a more formal defense organization, with planning and coordinating functions and perhaps a combined command, might eventually be built. While such an organization would not be comparable to NATO and its elaborate command structure, it would provide useful machinery for developing a unified regional defense effort provided that both the major outside contributors to the defense of the area and such states as Iran, Iraq, and Egypt were either members of or closely associated with it.

64. The crucial point in the decision of most Middle East states on whether to align themselves openly with the West might have been reached when they adhered to a loose regional grouping. However, additional obstacles would have to be overcome before tight regional defense arrangements could be created. While various Middle East states might be willing to adhere to a loose regional defense grouping, mainly as a *quid pro quo* for US military aid, most of them are presently unwilling to accept the scale of commitments involved in membership in a formal defense organization. Even on a purely in-

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traregional basis, existing rivalries and suspicions would have to be sharply reduced before an effective organization could be created.

65. In addition, potential participants would be confronted with the unpleasant question whether to openly accept Western partnership in defense of the area. Any realistic effort to set up a unified defense structure in the Middle East would require that the outside powers on which the principal defense burden would fall be given an effective role. Indeed, many of the potential participants would consider that membership in a tight regional defense organization would involve increased risks of Soviet counteraction which they would be justified in accepting only if provided with specific Western security guarantees as well as continuing military aid. At the same time open acceptance of Western participation would be subject to political opposition at home.

66. Even if the question of Western partnership were resolved in principle, knotty problems would arise in defining the rights and relationships of the various participants. The UK, which with Commonwealth support expects to bear an important responsibility for actual defense of the area, clearly desires a NATO-type organization in which both its right of access to necessary bases and facilities and British command responsibility would be clearly established. On the other hand, the Middle East states, while they might eventually be willing to acknowledge some form of US-UK partnership in the defense of the area, would be reluctant to take any step which appeared to confirm and extend special Western positions in the area. The Arab states, Turkey, and Iran would bitterly oppose any effort to install a British commander-in-chief, although they might be willing to settle for a US commander. In fact, the Arab states would probably seek either to relegate their Western partners to the position of associate members in some such arrangement as that represented by the Arab Collective Security Pact, or to insure for themselves full equality in any general defense association. They might also seek to limit the role of Turkey and Pakistan. Ex-

cept possibly for Turkey, the Middle East states would strongly oppose French participation, because of the conviction that France had little to contribute and because of resentment of France's North African policies. There might also be regional opposition to direct Greek and Commonwealth participation, from fear of being outvoted by outsiders.

Prospects for Western Acquisition of Base and Operating Rights

67. Despite the key role of the West in Middle East defense, the present attitudes of most Middle East countries not only prevent Western development of new bases and facilities, but jeopardize timely Western access to existing facilities, notably the Suez base. Moreover, the general lack of provision for access to Middle East territory in the event of threatened or actual Soviet attack might lead to critical delays in deployment of Western defense forces. A special problem arises from the fact that Israel lies athwart the lines of communication forward from the Suez base. In any event, even if Western access to the area were assured, prior construction of base and logistical facilities would be essential if Western forces were to be able to operate effectively.

68. Even creation of a loose regional defense grouping and the initiation of related US aid programs would encourage the development of a more favorable atmosphere for at least some working arrangement for the base and operating rights on which timely and effective Western participation in defense of the area will in large measure depend. Should willingness to cooperate with the West proceed to the point where a formal defense organization with direct US-UK participation were created, the prospects for securing and retaining such rights would further increase, particularly since such an organization would provide a convenient umbrella for base agreements.

69. However, such developments would probably not overcome the basic reluctance of the Arab states (Libya and Jordan excepted) to countenance any infringement of their terri-

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torial sovereignty in peacetime, nor the unwillingness of Iran to expose itself to Soviet pressure over such an issue. Should the West push too fast for such commitments in the face of local opposition, it might jeopardize over-all progress toward Middle East defense cooperation and perhaps the existence of friendly governments. These states would probably permit construction of militarily useful roads and other communications facilities under US economic assistance programs. Moreover, in the long term, they might be persuaded to permit the construction of new purely military facilities and to accord war-time operating rights in their territories. However, they would probably demand that such facilities remain under their own control and would probably be reluctant to grant more than limited peacetime access to them. In any event, the Middle East countries would seek to exact a maximum price in aid and commitments for any base or operating rights provided the West.

V. PROBABLE REACTIONS OF OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES

70. *Probable Soviet Reaction.* The relative inactivity of the USSR in an area traditionally regarded as of great strategic importance to Russia and a field for Russian expansionist ambitions has probably been due to Soviet preoccupation with more immediately important theaters elsewhere, the weakness of local Communist cadres in the area, and the fact that even without Soviet initiative postwar developments in the Middle East have been unfavorable to the West. To the extent that the Western Powers succeed in offsetting these developments and in building toward a situation of strength in the area, we believe that the USSR will feel compelled to react.

71. There are already signs of greater Soviet political warfare activity in the area. The Kremlin is hypersensitive to potential threats to its own security and almost certainly believes that present US moves are primarily designed to secure US offensive bases along the southern Soviet frontier. If further progress is made toward development of regional defenses, especially if this involves US bases in the area, the Bloc will make in-

creased efforts to exploit anti-Western feelings and to influence the Middle East states against cooperation with the West.

72. At least initially, the USSR will probably use inducements more than threats. While it will continue, particularly with exposed states like Iran and Afghanistan, to use warnings and veiled threats to discourage participation in a regional defense grouping, it will lay greater emphasis on efforts to discredit the regional defense effort and to point up the advantages of friendship with the USSR. As already evident, Soviet diplomacy will hold out the possibility of closer trade and cultural relations, utilizing additional offers of economic and technical assistance. The USSR will probably seek to discourage Arab participation by giving maximum support to the Arab cause in the UN. Overall Communist propaganda will probably continue to emphasize the US "warmonger" theme, while Middle East Communists will seek to strengthen their ties with nationalists and non-Communist reformers. The Communists would also seek to exploit any frictions which arose among the sponsors and potential members of a regional defense grouping.

73. Should Middle East defense developments appear to be leading to significant expansion of Western bases or of Middle East defense capabilities, the USSR would probably turn increasingly to pressure tactics. Logical points for such pressure would be Iran, with its Tudeh Party, and Afghanistan, which is remote from Western support and whose extensive trade with the USSR makes it particularly vulnerable. The Soviet treaties with both these states provide convenient pretexts for blackmailing tactics. If these countries showed signs of veering toward a US-sponsored defense grouping, the Kremlin might stage border incidents along their frontiers or promote internal disorders. We believe, however, that the USSR would not consider Western successes sufficiently threatening to warrant major retaliatory action such as invasion of Iran or Afghanistan. It would almost certainly not risk such invasion unless it felt it could safely do so without precipitating a gen-

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eral war. Even then it might hesitate to take a step so likely to stimulate anti-Communist defense preparations in other non-Soviet countries and to alienate neutralist opinion in India and other Asian states.

74. Thus we estimate that Western efforts to build a situation of strength in the Middle East would lead to an increase in overall tensions between the Communist and non-Communist worlds. It is possible that Soviet countermeasures might dissuade some countries from participation in regional defense. On the other hand, Soviet pressure tactics might have the opposite result from that intended and induce Middle Eastern countries to draw closer to the West. Much would depend upon the state of relations between the West and the Middle East countries and upon the type of Soviet pressure used.

75. *Probable Indian Reaction.* India has already made clear that it opposes the "northern tier" concept and it is actively attempting to discourage Iran, Iraq, and Egypt from adhering to the Turk-Pakistani agreement. It regards US efforts to bolster the defenses of the Middle East as inimical to Indian interests because they tend to: (a) strengthen Pakistan's prestige and military position; (b) reduce the appeal of India's "non-alignment" doctrines; (c) weaken India's pretensions to leadership of the Arab-Asian bloc; and (d) increase Soviet military interest in South Asia and the Middle East. Despite some signs of Indian concern over Communist advances in Southeast Asia, India will probably continue at least so long as Nehru remains at the helm to advocate a policy of "non-alignment" and to use its influence to discourage Western efforts to improve the defenses of the Middle East. Should Pakistan be materially strengthened as a result of US aid, India also would seek to build up its own forces so as to maintain the present strength ratio.

76. While further US moves in support of the "northern tier" concept would thus contribute to US-Indian tensions, it is unlikely that an open rift would develop between India and the US as a result of this factor alone. In any event, it is extremely unlikely that India

would move significantly closer to the Soviet Bloc.

77. *Attitude of Afghanistan.* Further "northern tier" defense developments will also have repercussions on the position and interests of Afghanistan. There are already indications of a more active Soviet economic policy in Afghanistan, probably in response to US arms aid to Pakistan. Moreover, despite Kabul's differences with Karachi over the Pushtoonistan issue and its resultant *pro forma* protest of such US aid, it has secretly expressed interest in joining in Middle East defense arrangements in return for US guarantees and military aid. In view of Afghanistan's exposed and isolated position *vis-a-vis* the USSR, however, we doubt that it would actually go so far as to adhere to the Turk-Pakistani agreement without sufficiently binding and realistic US security guarantees to enable it to face almost certain Soviet counterpressure. Soviet pressure would probably prevent the Afghans from accepting US military aid even though no political commitments were involved.

78. *Attitude of France.* The French are anxious to: (a) maintain their historical position as one of the major powers with Middle East interests; (b) preserve what they hopefully regard as their special cultural position, particularly in Syria and Lebanon; and (c) forestall any unfavorable repercussions on their North African position which might arise from defense developments in the Middle East. France will insist on being consulted on Middle East defense schemes and would probably seek to be included in any defense grouping in which the Western Powers directly participated. We believe, however, that because of preoccupations elsewhere, France would not insist on such participation. Nor would France be able to contribute either forces or arms aid of any significance.

79. *Attitudes of Other States.* Greece has displayed interest in joining any formal Middle East defense grouping, but would probably not insist on it if the US was strongly opposed. Fully extended in meeting its own defense problems, Greece could not make any material

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contribution. Other NATO countries, like Denmark, Norway, and the Low Countries, might object in varying degrees to any indirect extension of their NATO commitments through US-UK participation in a Middle East alliance, but they would be unlikely to do more than protest.

VI. CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE OF CURRENT EFFORTS TO CREATE A MIDDLE EAST DEFENSE GROUPING

80. In our view, if a loose Middle East defense grouping based on the Turk-Pakistani agreement failed to develop, or if such a grouping were not subsequently expanded into a formal defense organization, this failure would not have seriously adverse effects on US relations with the area. The failure of the more formal MEC and MEDO proposals did not undermine

US relations with the Arab states, though it did provide some focus for anti-Western propaganda. Moreover, the new step-by-step approach avoids pressure for direct and extensive area defense commitments, such as would be likely to arouse a strongly adverse reaction from many Middle East states. Even if only partial success were achieved and many states failed to participate in regional defense arrangements, it would still provide a political foundation for later efforts to build a position of strength. However, a clear US failure to secure the adherence of important area states to a regional defense grouping would strengthen the position of antiforeign elements which had opposed the grouping. Moreover, from the military point of view this failure would still leave a defensive gap between Turkey and Pakistan.

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APPENDIX

AGREEMENT FOR FRIENDLY COOPERATION BETWEEN TURKEY AND PAKISTAN

This agreement, signed on 2 April 1954, provides for: (a) consultation on "international matters of mutual interest"; (b) continuing cultural, economic, and technical cooperation; (c) consultation and cooperation on certain defense matters; and (d) accession of "any state, whose participation is considered by the contracting parties useful for achieving the purposes of the present agreement."

It also contains pledges that the signatories will not contract new commitments inconsistent with the agreement, "participate in any alliance or activities directed against the other," or intervene in each other's internal affairs. The agreement is to last for five years and to be automatically renewable for additional five-year periods unless denounced a year before each such period ends.

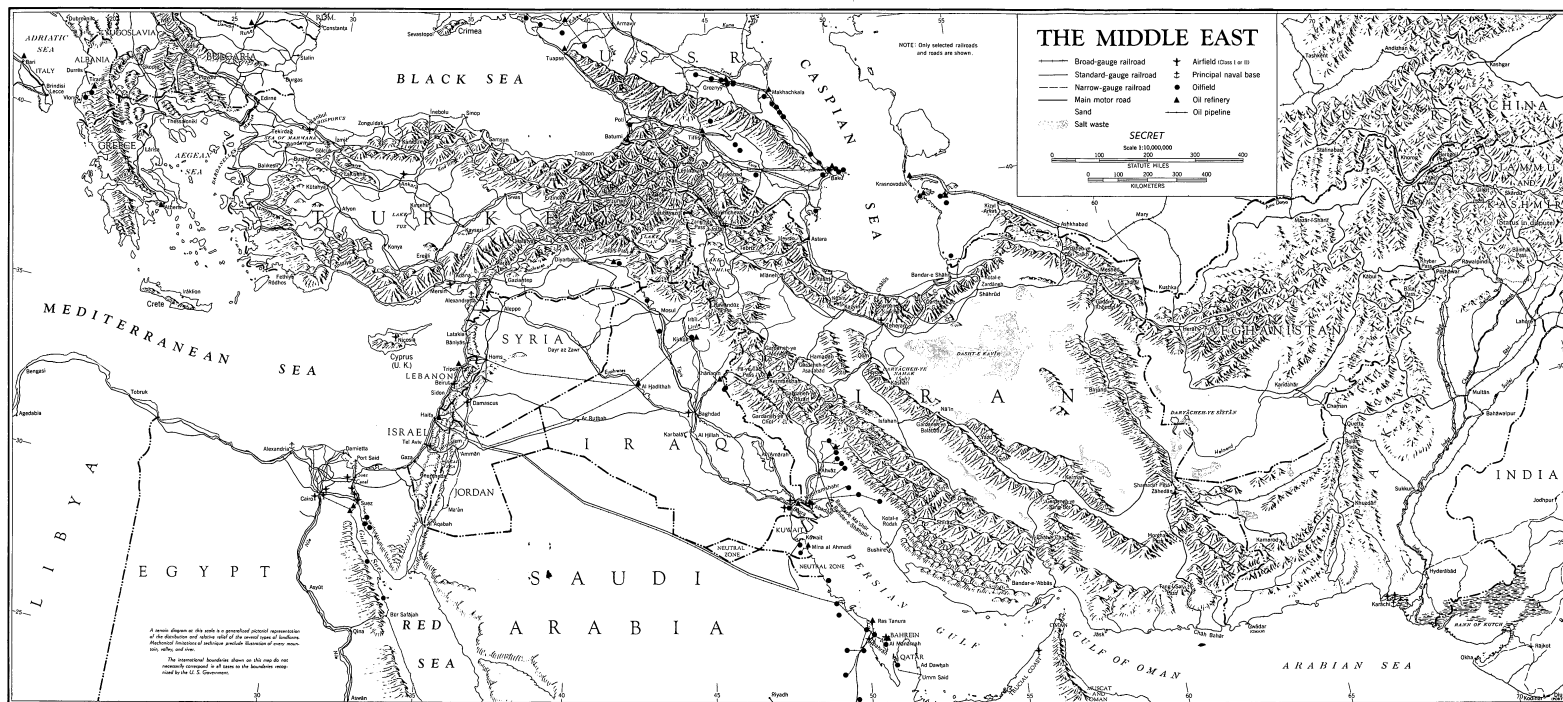
The key security provisions of the agreement are as follows:

Article 2. The contracting parties will consult on international matters of mutual interest and, taking into account international requirements and conditions, cooperate between themselves to the maximum extent.

Article 4. The consultation and cooperation between the contracting parties in the field of defense shall cover the following points:

- A. Exchange of information for the purpose of deriving benefit jointly from technical experience and progress.
- B. Endeavors to meet, as far as possible, the requirements of the parties in the production of arms and ammunition.
- C. Studies and determination of the ways and extent of cooperation which might be effected between them in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, should an unprovoked attack occur against them from outside.

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